



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Planning Division

m e m o r a n d u m

TO: The Urbana Plan Commission

FROM: Rebecca Bird, Planning Associate

DATE: October 17, 2008

SUBJECT: Plan Case 2087-T-08: A request by the Zoning Administrator to adopt design guidelines for the Lincoln-Busey Corridor, amend the Urbana Zoning Ordinance to enable design review in certain areas, and establish the Lincoln-Busey Corridor design overlay district.

Plan Case 2087-T-08 is a request to adopt design guidelines for the Lincoln-Busey Corridor, amend the Zoning Ordinance to enable design review in certain areas, and establish the Lincoln-Busey Corridor design overlay district. This case was first reviewed at the October 9, 2008 Plan Commission meeting, and the staff memo and supporting documents for that meeting are expressly referenced here as part of the consideration. The Plan Commission and members of the public provided comments at that meeting. City staff has reviewed those comments and revised the text amendment accordingly.

Changes

Membership. The Plan Commission suggested reviewing the membership of the Design Review Board. As the text amendment now reads, the Board will be composed of a member of the Plan Commission, a member of the Historic Preservation Commission, a licensed architect, a local developer, a real estate professional, and two residents of Urbana. The first four members would be from the MOR DRB. Although the Plan Commission suggested three residents, staff believes having two residents and a real estate professional (i.e., a real estate agent, a property manager, a rental property owner, etc.) would better preserve the balance between residents and professionals with technical expertise. The residents would include one representative from each overlay district in the City.

Administrative Review. The Plan Commission asked for further clarification regarding the administrative review process and suggested including a chart to better define the difference between an application that would require administrative review and an application that would require review by the full Board. Staff considered a chart such as in the Historic Preservation Ordinance but ultimately felt that requiring a joint decision by the Zoning Administrator and the Chair of the Board would provide a better process. The chart works well in the Historic

Preservation Ordinance as historic preservation has relatively well-defined standards that can be applied fairly across the board, whereas design review can be very situational and depends on the unique circumstances of the project.

Additional Issues

The Plan Commission suggested including more detail regarding the process of creating new design overlay districts and adopting new design guidelines. Staff envisions this process as being one initiated by the City Council in response to a particular need, as in the case of the Lincoln-Busey Corridor. City Council has recently directed staff to consider a second design overlay district for part of the Historic East Urbana Neighborhood. The process of creating this and any additional design overlay districts would follow a similar process to that of the Lincoln-Busey Corridor: it would involve public participation and include the standard notification procedures as defined in Section XI-10 of the Zoning Ordinance.

There was a suggestion during public participation that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) should be the body to administer design review in the Lincoln-Busey Corridor. While that may seem logical as the Lincoln-Busey Corridor is an older established neighborhood, it would present a number of difficulties. Historic preservation is a relatively well-defined concept with a prescribed legal meaning. This plan case is not proposing that the LBC be designated a historic district, but a district that will be subject to design review. The HPC administers review for locally designated historic landmarks and districts. A second difficulty with this suggestion is that as the City is interested in creating a second design review overlay district, it is necessary to create one Board that will be able to administer design review for multiple design review overlay districts for administrative purposes. Creating a new Board for each design review overlay district is not administratively feasible.

Recommendation

Based on the evidence and findings presented in the October 3, 2008 staff memo to the Plan Commission, staff recommends that the Plan Commission forward Plan Case No. 2074-T-08 to the Urbana City Council with a recommendation to APPROVE the Lincoln-Busey Corridor Design Guidelines, APPROVE the Zoning Ordinance text amendment creating the Design Review Board, and APPROVE the Lincoln-Busey Corridor Design Review Overlay District.

Attachments:

Exhibit A: Proposed Ordinance

cc:

Dick Brazee
West Urbana Neighborhood Association, c/o Esther Patt, 706 South Coler, #3, Urbana, Illinois 61801

Section XI-15. Design Review Board

A. *Creation and Purpose*

1. Upon the effective date of this amendment, there is hereby created a Design Review Board to administer design review in designated areas ~~subject to design review~~ in conformance with the requirements of this Section.
2. The Design Review Board is created for the purpose of reviewing and approving or disapproving applications, in accordance with this section.
3. The Design Review Board has the following objectives for reviewing applications in areas subject to design review:
 - a. Review the design of new construction to ensure compatibility with the neighborhood's visual and aesthetic character through the use of the adopted design guidelines; and
 - b. Determine if applications meet the intent of the district as stated in the adopted design guidelines.

B. *Powers and Duties.* The Design Review Board shall have the following powers:

1. The Design Review Board may adopt its own rules, regulations, and procedures consistent with the provisions of this Section and the laws of the State of Illinois.
2. To hold public hearings and to review applications within areas subject to design review. The Design Review Board may require applicants to submit plans, drawings, specifications and other information as may be necessary to make decisions in addition to the application requirements specified in Section XI-15.G.
3. To undertake any other action or activity necessary or appropriate to implement its powers and duties and to implement the purpose of this section.
4. Although the Design Review Board is not authorized to grant variances, special use permits, or conditional use permits, an application for design review can be processed simultaneously with applications for any of the above.
5. In a decision on an application, the Design Review Board is not authorized to prohibit or deny a land use that is permitted by right in the applicable zoning district, although it may prohibit or deny permission for development even though that development may be necessary for a permitted land use.

C. *Membership*

1. The Design Review Board shall be comprised of seven members. Four members shall constitute a quorum. The members of the Board shall be appointed by the Mayor with approval of City Council.

The persons filling the following positions on the MOR Development Review Board per Section XI-12.C.1 are automatically appointed to the Design Review Board:

- a. A member of the Urbana Plan Commission;
- b. A member of the Urbana Historic Preservation Commission;

- c. A licensed architect; and
- d. A local developer.

These four members of the Design Review Board shall continue to also serve as members of the MOR Development Review Board. The additional three members of the Design Review Board shall consist of:

- a. A real estate professional; and
- b. Two residents of Urbana. The residents should include:
 - 1. One representative from each design review district who owns and occupies a residence in the district.
 - 2. If there is only one design review district, the second resident shall own and occupy a residence in any other part of the City.
- 2. Design Review Board members shall serve without compensation and shall serve terms of three years. Members of the MOR Development Review Board shall be automatically reappointed to the Design Review Board if reappointed to the MOR Development Review Board. The additional two members may be reappointed at the conclusion of their respective terms.
- 3. The Mayor shall declare vacant the seat of any Design Review Board member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings without notification to the Secretary, or who fails to attend one-half of all meetings held during any one-year period. In such cases, as well as for resignations, incapacity, death, or any other vacancy, the Mayor shall appoint a successor with approval of the City Council.

D. *Officers.*

- 1. There shall be a Chair elected by the Design Review Board, who shall serve a term of one year and shall be eligible for re-election. Elections shall be held annually.
- 2. The Chair shall preside over meetings. In the absence of the Chair, those members present shall elect a temporary Chair.
- 3. Secretary. The Secretary of the Design Review Board shall be a representative of the Community Development Services Department of the City of Urbana. The Secretary shall:
 - a. Take minutes of each Design Review Board meeting, an original of which shall be kept in the office of the Community Development Services Department;
 - b. Provide administrative and technical assistance to the Design Review Board to assist in making decisions and findings as provided herein;
 - c. Publish and distribute copies of the minutes, reports and decisions of the Design Review Board;
 - d. Give notice as provided herein or by law for all public hearings conducted by the Design Review Board;
 - e. Advise the Mayor of vacancies on the Design Review Board and expiring terms of Design Review Board members;

- f. Prepare and submit to the Zoning Board of Appeals and the City Council a record of the proceedings before the Design Review Board on any other matters requiring Zoning Board of Appeals consideration; and
- g. Have no vote.

E. *Meetings.*

1. The Design Review Board shall hold at least one meeting per year. Meetings shall be called as needed.
2. All meetings shall conform to the requirements of the Illinois Open Meetings Act. All meetings of the Design Review Board shall be held in a public place designated by the Chair, and shall be open to the public, except as allowed by law. At any meeting of the Design Review Board, any interested person may appear and be heard either in person or by an authorized agent or attorney.

F. *Decisions.*

1. Every Board member present must vote "aye" or "nay" unless that Board member abstains due to an announced conflict of interest.
2. Abstaining shall not change the count of Board members present to determine the existence of a quorum.
3. Approval of an application shall require a majority vote of those members present and not abstaining.

G. *Application Submittal Requirements*

1. A request to the Design Review Board for application approval ~~by~~ shall be made by the applicant in writing on forms provided by the City, accompanied by the required plans, and filed with the Secretary of the Board. Applications ~~Each request~~ shall be submitted with the required fee as provided in Section XI-8.
2. The Design Review Board Secretary shall have five working days to determine whether an application is complete. If the Secretary finds the application incomplete, he/she shall notify the applicant, who shall have five working days from the date notified to submit the missing information.
3. An application shall be considered complete if accompanied by, at a minimum, the following information:
 - a. A scaled drawing showing:
 1. Size and dimensions of the subject parcel drawn to scale;
 2. Location and widths of adjacent rights-of-ways, sidewalks and street pavement;
 3. Identification of neighboring property owners listed on the application;
 4. Location of all existing structures on the parcel;
 5. Location of adjacent parcels and structures;
 6. Location and size of proposed structures or additions to be built on the parcel including proposed setbacks from the property lines;
 7. Floor plans;
 8. Location and layout of any proposed access drives, parking area and walkways;

9. Location of existing trees and shrubs and proposed landscaping;
 10. Relevant site details including lighting, dumpster locations, signage, and other features;
- b. Elevation renderings of ~~the~~ proposed structures or additions indicating the proposed materials to be used in construction;
 - c. Detail view drawings as necessary to show key design elements; and
 - d. Site data, including lot area, building square footage, floor area ratio, open space ratio, height, number of parking spaces and number of apartment units (if multi-family).

Plans shall be submitted at a graphic scale of no less than one inch per ten feet.

4. The Design Review Board may require additional information as necessary to consider applications.
5. Application Review fee, as applicable.

H. Zoning Administrator Review Procedures.

Upon receipt of a complete application, the Zoning Administrator and the Chair of the Design Review Board shall determine whether the proposed work would substantially change the overall appearance and/or scale of an existing building.

1. If both the Zoning Administrator and the Chair determine that the proposed work would not substantially change the overall appearance and/or scale of an existing building, such applications may be reviewed administratively. Determinations shall be in writing, dated and signed by both the Zoning Administrator and the Chair. Joint determinations as to whether the application is to be reviewed administratively or by the Board cannot be appealed to the Zoning Board of Appeals.
2. In the case of administrative review, the Zoning Administrator shall review applications for consistency with the applicable design guidelines. If the application is consistent with the design guidelines, the Zoning Administrator shall administratively approve the application and should issue written findings. The Secretary shall insure that copies of approved applications are maintained on file in the Department of Community Development Services for public review.
3. If either the Zoning Administrator or the Chair determines that the proposed work would substantially change an existing building, the application shall be reviewed by the Design Review Board.

Applications to construct new buildings shall be reviewed by the Design Review Board.

I. *Design Review Board Scope*

1. The Design Review Board shall review all plans for:
 - a. New principal structures;
 - b. Renovations that would result in a substantial change to the overall appearance and/or scale of existing buildings, as determined per Section XI-15.I; and
 - c. Other significant site changes, such as parking lot construction.

2. ~~Applications~~ ~~Proposals for renovations~~ that would not result in a substantially change to the overall appearance and/or scale of an existing building shall not require review by the Design Review Board.

J. *Design Review Board Review Procedures*

1. Once a complete application has been submitted, the Secretary shall schedule a meeting to consider and act on the application request. The meeting, which shall include a public hearing, shall be scheduled within 45 working days after the completed application has been received. Notification shall be given per Section XI-10.
2. At the Design Review Board meeting during which an application is to be considered, City staff will give a presentation evaluating the application. Following the presentation, the Design Review Board will hold a public hearing. After the public hearing, the Design Review Board will review the application 1) according to the criteria in Section XI-15.K; 2) using the adopted design guidelines; and 3) considering testimony given at the public hearing. The Design Review Board shall then vote on whether to approve the proposed application. A majority vote of those members present and not abstaining is required to approve an application.

The Board may:

- a. Approve the application. If the proposed application conforms to the requirements of this Ordinance and the intent of the adopted design guidelines, the Design Review Board shall make ~~the~~ appropriate findings and approve the application.
- b. Approve the application with conditions. In approving an application, the Board may prescribe appropriate conditions and safeguards in conformity with the adopted design guidelines and this Ordinance. Violations of such conditions and safeguards, when made a part of the terms under which the application is approved, shall be deemed a violation of this Ordinance and punishable under the provisions of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance.
- c. Invite the applicant to resubmit. If the application does not conform to the requirements of this Ordinance or to the adopted design guidelines, the Design Review Board may invite the applicant to resubmit the application, giving recommendations to the applicant on ways to improve the design of the proposal and achieve conformity with this Ordinance and the intent of the adopted design guidelines.
- d. Deny the application. The Board may disapprove the proposed application, making findings stating the inadequacies of the proposal. The Board shall state its reasons for denial in writing and should make recommendations to the applicant on to how to bring the proposal into compliance with the design guidelines.

Within five working days of the Board's decision, the Secretary shall send notice to the applicant which should ~~The applicant shall be notified in writing of the Board's decision within five working days, which notification shall~~ address the relevant and applicable reasons for the decision as well as any recommendations given by the Board.

If the application is denied, the applicant shall have the opportunity to amend the application to conform to the recommendations. The applicant shall be heard at a meeting of the Design Review Board within 30 days of receipt of the amended application at which time a majority vote of those members present and not abstaining is required to approve the amended application.

3. Application approval is required prior to the issuance of a related building permit or Certificate of Occupancy.

4. Any order, requirement, decision or condition of approval made by the Zoning Administrator or Design Review Board is appealable by any person aggrieved thereby to the Zoning Board of Appeals in accordance with the procedures of Section XI-3.C. Upon the filing of an appeal, the complete record of the Design Review Board's minutes, findings and decision shall be submitted to the Board of Zoning Appeals for action on the requested appeal. The Zoning Board of Appeals shall have the final authority to approve or disapprove an application.
5. The Secretary of the Board shall keep minutes of its proceedings, showing the vote of each member and shall also keep records of its findings and official decisions.
6. The procedure for amending an application already approved by the Design Review Board, or for a request to change conditions attached to the approval of an application, shall be the same procedure as a new application request.
7. Approval of an application pursuant to Section XI-15 shall become null and void unless a related building permit or Certificate of Occupancy is issued within one year after the date on which the Board approves the application. A one-year extension may be granted by the Zoning Administrator when a written request with substantial basis is submitted prior to the expiration of the one-year term.
8. Any building permit or Certificate of Occupancy issued pursuant to an approved application may be revoked by the City for failure to comply with the conditions of approval.

K. Application Review Criteria.

1. Applications must demonstrate conformance with the land use and development standards of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance.
2. Applications shall be reviewed and considered by the Design Review Board according to the criteria listed in the design guidelines enacted by the Urbana City Council for the specific geographic area in which the subject parcel is located. In reviewing development proposals, the Design Review Board shall determine conformance with the intent of the design guidelines as contained in the adopted design guidelines manual, as well as the overall compatibility of the proposal with the character of the neighborhood.

L. Design Review Overlay Districts and Adopted Design Guidelines

1. Design review overlay districts with ~~their~~ associated design guidelines shall be adopted under separate ordinances. ~~and shall be housed in the~~ The City of Urbana's Community Development Services Department shall make design guidelines available for public review and distribution. A design review overlay district shall be created by adopting a design guidelines manual for a specific geographic area.

"Adopted design guidelines" as referred to herein are the design guidelines associated with a design review overlay district, as adopted by ordinance.

The following, adopted under separate ordinances, are the design overlay districts in the City of Urbana and have adopted design guidelines manuals:

- a. Lincoln-Busey Corridor Overlay District. The LBC is bounded by Illinois Street to the north, Busey Avenue to the east, Pennsylvania Avenue to the south, and Lincoln Avenue to the west. (Ordinance Nos. _____ and _____.) ~~The Lincoln-Busey Corridor Design Overlay District was created and the Lincoln-Busey Corridor~~

~~Design Guidelines were adopted on October, _____, 2008, under Ordinance No. _____.~~

2. Any proposed amendments to adopted design guidelines shall be considered by the Urbana Plan Commission in the form of a public hearing. The Plan Commission shall forward a recommendation on any proposed amendments to the Urbana City Council for final action.